



# FEMA

## **Texas Severe Storms TX-4332-DR** *Media Analysis Report/Afternoon Edition* *September 9, 2017*

### Hot Issues

- None

### Analysis/Trends

- Coverage continues on the recovery process faced by thousands of Texans. A Weatherford Democrat article focuses on the unimaginable loss by hurricane survivors and the long road to recovery.
- Several print and broadcast stories show the struggle of Harvey's aftermath, with problems of home and debris clean-up. An Associated Press story focuses on the piles of garbage lining Houston streets and how they're dealing with it.
- There is steady coverage of volunteers donating their time and money to help survivors. A KHOU-TV story reveals the J.J. Watt fund has surpassed \$30 million.
- Continued wide coverage of Hurricane Irma while Florida waits for its impact.

### Social Media Analysis

The volume of Harvey discussions continues to decline slowly, with a focus on recovery efforts. The variety of donations and volunteers coming in to affected areas, especially Rockport, Beaumont, Katy, and Refugio, has led to residents increasingly discussing how they can better organize recovery efforts in these communities. Most volunteers and residents continue to actively share each other's posts to make ad hoc connections between those who need help and those offering help.

### Summary of Coverage

- Thousands still disrupted by flooding disaster in southeast Texas
- Houston struggling to get back on its feet after Harvey
- Florida orders massive evacuations and waits for Irma's impact

This report compiled by Julie Foster, [Julie.Foster@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:Julie.Foster@fema.dhs.gov)

- Texas' most desperate may be forced to leave after Harvey
- Former inspector explains FEMA documentation process on damaged houses
- Garbage lines Houston streets after Harvey flooding
- Atascocita neighborhood working to recover from flood
- Rebuilding your home after a disaster
- Two hundred Houston schools damaged by Hurricane Harvey
- J.J. Watt fund surpasses \$30 million for Harvey relief fund
- Indiana churches form teams to help with Harvey relief in southeast Texas
- Beyonce returns home to Houston to help those affected by Harvey
- Katrina survivors lend a helping hand to Houston after hurricane
- Texas businesses and churches raise money and collect donations for hurricane survivors
- Social Media

## Notable Quotes

“When they say we will get tons of rain, don’t take it lightly. We just don’t know when to trust the media.”  
– Chel Bailey, Atascocita area resident

“We have a long road to hoe if we’re going to rebuild the fourth largest city in the United States as well as the entire geographic region.” – TX Governor Greg Abbott

“It’s a worst-case scenario. Katrina was a 500-year flooding event, and you hope that we’d have been spared something that catastrophic. But here we are again, and I’d like to hope that the research and the dissemination of that research after Katrina is helping Texas school districts now.”- Dr. Michael Ward, Univ. of Southern Mississippi professor

“We can tell you ‘We’ve been through this and you’re going to be okay. You are going to be better than okay. You are going to find you are going to be stronger, more resilient.” – Connie Uddo, New Orleans resident

## Headlines

[\*\*Thousands Disrupted By Disaster In Southeast Texas\*\*](#)

[\*\*Best Of U.S. On Display In Texas\*\*](#)

[\*\*Florida Orders 5.6 Million To Evacuate, Stressing That Irma Is Unlike Anything Residents Have Seen\*\*](#)

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## Flood Recovery

[\*\*Harvey’s wrath may force rural Texas’ most desperate to leave town for good\*\*](#)

[\*\*After A Disaster, FEMA Documents Home Damage, A Former Inspector Explains\*\*](#)

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Volunteers/Donations/Charities

[J.J. Watt fund surpasses \\$30 million for Harvey relief](#)

[Texas Flood Relief Planned](#)

[BeYonce volunteered to help Houston residents affected by the recent hurricane](#)

[This is human kindness': Hurricane Katrina survivors help Houston after Harvey](#)

[Texas Connects Us: Helping Hurricane Harvey Victims](#)

Stories

## **Thousands Disrupted By Disaster In Southeast Texas**

[Weatherford \(TX\) Democrat,](#)

September 9, 2017

Rescuers first spotted a 3-year-old wearing a pink backpack in the floodwaters of a Texas drainage canal.

Then they made a discovery that would stir hearts across the country: The young girl was clinging to her mom's floating body. The 41-year-old nurse had died trying to move her daughter to safety after floodwaters rose around their car in Beaumont as they attempted to flee.

Stories of unimaginable loss continue to surface in the wake of Hurricane Harvey, which slammed into the Gulf Coast as a Category 4 hurricane before converting into an unrelenting tropical storm that stuck around for days.

Now, the nation has turned its attention to a new monster, Hurricane Irma, raging in the Atlantic toward Florida. But back in southeast Texas, the suffering from Hurricane Harvey remains inescapable.

Even two weeks after Harvey's landfall, the immediate effects of the storm linger large. The devastating floodwaters — the result of an historic four-foot deluge — stubbornly fester in Houston and other hard-hit communities.

The still-standing murky mess has delayed recovery efforts, making attempts at quantifying the extent of the massive storm's impact on the state — and beyond — still anyone's best guess.

Right after Harvey struck, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott called it “one of the largest disasters America has ever faced.”

No one disagreed.

Abbott has put the price tag for the storm's damage that inundated both Houston and rural Texas, with flooding occurring as far inland as La Grange, at as much as \$180 billion. That is significantly more than what the federal government spent after Hurricane Katrina. Nearly one-fifth of Texas was under a federal disaster declaration at the height of Harvey.

“We have a long road to hoe if we’re going to rebuild the fourth largest city in the United States as well as the entire geographic region,” Abbott said on Fox News Sunday.

President Donald Trump, who has twice visited Texas for a first-hand look at conditions, asked Congress for \$7.9 billion as a “down payment.” Congress approved the request this week, doubling the amount of disaster aid.

Even so, securing more federal aid will likely encounter a political battle in Washington while back home, Texans face months, if not years, of challenges in housing displaced residents, rebuilding homes and businesses, maneuvering flood insurance programs, repairing infrastructure and restoring the Southeast Texas economy.

“Harvey may have staggered us, but it didn’t knock us out,” said John Sharp, chancellor of Texas A&M University who on Thursday was tapped to lead a new state commission focused on the rebuilding effort.

Sharp said the commission’s work would be, in part, to “future-proof” what is rebuilt.

Hard recovery

The stories of the people who perished slowly trickled out in the wake of Harvey.

There was an infant who slipped from her parents’ grasp in raging floodwaters in New Waverly. There was a Houston police officer whose patrol car was swept up in the torrent on his way to work. There were the six family members who were trapped in a van carried off by rushing waters.

At least 70 people died in Texas. More people are still missing.

It could have been far worse. More than 122,000 people were rescued or otherwise taken to safety. So were more than 5,000 pets.

Many survivors are returning home, though, to find fresh heartache. At least 14,000 houses were destroyed. Harvey left its mark on hundreds of thousands of others.

For Texans without flood insurance, which is most of those living in the affected areas, repairing their homes will mean depleting their savings or going into debt. Some have predicted that the out-of-pocket costs could surpass the \$28 billion that people spent to restore their homes after Katrina.

Robert Hunter, director of insurance with the Consumer Federation of America, a consumer advocacy group, said this reality will likely cause many low-income homeowners to abandon homes requiring repairs that far surpass any equity in the home.

That’s what happened after Katrina, particularly in New Orleans’ Ninth Ward, Hunter said.

“They’re just going to say, ‘Forget it,’” said Hunter, who is also a former Texas insurance commissioner. “The sad thing is a lot of those people from New Orleans ended up (staying) in Houston, so they’re going through it again.”

But in spite of the grim circumstances, stories of endurance continued to bubble up from communities throughout the region, even as the storm unfolded.

“I’m smiling because otherwise I have to think about how my house is going to be underwater,” Charlene Crocker, a Walker County resident, said as she and her pup, Annabelle, were evacuated from her subdivision along the Trinity River.

‘Waiting game’

Harvey temporarily brought Texas’ Gulf Coast oil refineries to their knees and drove concerns about fuel shortages, leading to price gouging complaints, with a gallon of gas reportedly spiking as high as \$20 in the Houston area.

AAA expects consumers throughout the nation to continue to feel the effects of Harvey at the pump throughout the month, with the national average approaching levels not seen in two years. Hurricane Irma, with winds more ferocious than Harvey, won’t help bring down gas prices even if it doesn’t affect Texas.

Harvey also threatened the state’s beef cattle industry, the top producer of the nation’s beef. It robbed some cotton growers of a potentially bumper crop. It inflicted major damage on about 4,000 businesses and dramatically boosted unemployment benefit claims from those unable to work or whose employers have not yet reopened their doors.

A clearer view of Harvey’s economic toll on Texas will remain elusive until the state dries out. But the beastly storm is sure to leave scars.

One storm’s power to cripple the oil capital’s major refineries — taking out one-quarter of the U.S. production capacity at one point — has already sparked debate about whether the industry should look elsewhere to build future facilities in an attempt to better diversify the country’s energy infrastructure.

At least six refineries are now operating at a reduced rate, and others are in the process of restarting. Six others remain shut down, according to the U.S. Department of Energy, but lush inventories have helped satisfy demand during the downtime.

“As a reminder, with 230 million barrels of refined products in storage in the United States, we do not have a gasoline shortage,” Commissioner Ryan Sitton, who heads the Railroad Commission of Texas, which oversees the oil and gas industry, said in a statement Wednesday. “But some areas have experienced outages at gas pumps due to exponentially higher demand than normal as people stockpile fuel.”

It also remains to be seen how the 1.2 million cattle located within Harvey’s reach weathered the storm, but there are some positive reports emerging. Jeremy Fuchs, spokesman for the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, said assessing the losses is “a waiting game” right now.

“A lot of folks were able to heed our early warnings and get those cattle out of harm’s way,” Fuchs said. Helicopters became aerial cowpokes to move the cattle to higher ground.

“That said, the flooding — with the unprecedented rainfall — was much more dramatic than we expected, and so, in some instances, what they anticipated would be safe and secure wasn’t due to the overwhelming rain,” he added.

There are reports of cattle swimming their way to higher ground. The high floodwaters also buoyed some cows over fences.

“They’ll swim till their feet hit the ground,” said Ron Gill with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. “It’s just amazing what they’ve been able to do to get out of it.

“They’re pretty intelligent,” he added. “Sometimes we’re just not smart enough to know how smart they are.”

Not all have been so fortunate, of course. There are many still stranded on newly created islands, particularly in the far southeast region where floodwaters remain. Airboats and helicopters are being used to drop off feed to sustain them. Long-term health concerns remain, as well.

It is not clear yet how many cattle are likely to make it and how the losses might affect the market, although Gill and others said they were optimistic that it would not have a lasting effect on beef prices.

“We’re trying to be very careful about giving the economic impact yet because we just don’t have a clue,” Gill said.

Jill Nolin is a state reporter out of Atlanta for CNHI’s newspapers and websites. Reach her at [jnolin@cnhi.com](mailto:jnolin@cnhi.com). The Associated Press and Joplin Globe reporter Crystal Thomas contributed to this report.

## **Best Of U.S. On Display In Texas**

**Franklin (IN) Daily Journal**

September 9, 2017

Who knows how soon the Bayou City can get back on its feet, or if all the weary residents who fled will ever return? I know this much: Houston won’t be the same again for years, maybe never.

What happened here had all the markings of something apocalyptic, a grim reminder of human frailty and how vulnerable our cities are to withstanding Mother Nature’s harshest blows.

A 1-in-1,000-years flood turned the nation’s fourth-most populous city into an eerie ghost town, a treacherous archipelago navigable mostly by boats, dump trucks and other mechanical beasts powerful enough to plow through raging floodwaters.

By the time I got here, three days after Hurricane Harvey slammed into the Texas Gulf Coast, the city was reeling. Rescue operations were in full swing. Tens of thousands of residents were still trying to get out or find refuge. Thousands of dazed and displaced souls moved about like zombies, standing in long lines for shelter or slumping in rescue posts on the edge of downtown.

Before the week was over, Harvey, which had “weakened” into a tropical storm, was marching east and wreaking havoc on small towns in its path from southeast Texas to Louisiana and beyond. Poor Beaumont took a beating, Port Arthur was pummeled and other coastal cities were overwhelmed.

Still, Harvey’s life-threatening grip on Houston remains, testing the will of a city and its people.

“Texas,” declared Federal Emergency Management Agency chief Brock Long, “has never seen an event like this.”

No, certainly not in my lifetime. And, hopefully, never again.

But what we have seen before is the indomitable spirit that it will take to lift Houston and the other devastated cities back on their feet. That was on full display as we saw countless brave volunteers and emergency workers risking their lives to save others in Harvey's wake.

Here's what else I saw: Men and women in private boats from East Texas and Louisiana patrolling floodwaters to rescue people. A throng of people on a freeway overpass helping emergency workers pluck several people from raging waters below. A mother and daughter rushing to put up a blockade in front of a flooded street that had become a river of trouble.

I talked to rescue workers, including police officers, who'd had little or no sleep for days. And I encountered one person after another who'd rushed back into Houston, despite the lurking dangers, to help with the relief effort.

I also marveled at how Vic Parker, a Red Cross volunteer from Delaware, came in and took charge of the city's biggest evacuation center and shelter at the George R. Brown Convention Center downtown.

Parker, 55, a retired sales and marketing manager, had just left Canada, where she'd been assisting with a Red Cross wildfire relief effort, when she answered the call for help in Houston.

I asked her why she chose to come here, where danger was all around.

"My pay-it-forward," she said. "Any one of us could be in this position."

Each morning, she arrives about 7 and doesn't go back to her nearby hotel to rest until late at night, 12 to 14 hours later.

"This is where I'm needed," said Parker, stopping frequently to field questions from other volunteers or give a nod to a displaced resident. "This is a bridge to help people return to their normal lives."

Day by day, more volunteers flocked to relief centers from across the city, state and country, while those stranded here for days finally were able to start leaving by week's end.

That is the incongruous beauty of tragedy: It tends to bring out the best in us.

It also makes our differences less important as we stand together, rallying for the same cause.

"That water doesn't care how rich or poor you are," Houston police Lt. Jack Harvey said. "It doesn't care if you're black or white, Christian or Muslim ... or what your sexual orientation might be."

I met Lt. Harvey the first night I arrived. He'd had hardly any sleep for three days.

"I've got a nap here and there," he said. "But no one has had much time to sleep. There are still too many people in danger."

On this night, he was stationed at a bus transit center where dozens of mostly poor residents plucked from flooded apartments were delivered in tarp-covered dump trucks. Then, they waited for buses to take them to the convention center or another makeshift shelter.

Shortly before midnight, I asked Lt. Harvey how long he would be there.

"As long as I'm needed," he said.

That is the grit that's keeping the city grounded.

"All we got is each other," said Bobby Glenn, 63, a retired janitor who spent most of the week helping neighbors pull wet carpet and furniture out of their homes.

Glenn moved to Houston when he was a small child and has lived for decades in Kashmere Gardens, a historically black neighborhood near downtown. He stayed in his house with his two brothers because, quite frankly, he thought it was as safe as anyplace else.

Asked if he and his neighbors plan to stay put, he shot back: "I don't think nobody's going to leave Houston. If they leave, where they gonna go?"

I've come to believe the old adage: Adversity doesn't make character. It reveals it.

I saw a city, crippled by crisis, refusing to give up. I saw America at its best, standing together.

"We just have to fix up, patch up and move on," said Glenn. "That's all we can do."

Hopefully, that will be enough.

James Ragland is a columnist for the Dallas Morning News. Send comments to [letters@dailyjournal.net](mailto:letters@dailyjournal.net).

## **Florida Orders 5.6 Million To Evacuate, Stressing That Irma Is Unlike Anything Residents Have Seen**

[Washington Post](#)

September 9, 2017

POMPANO BEACH, Fla. — Hurricane Irma swept across the Bahamas and Cuba on Friday, hurtling toward Florida.

"It's not a question of if Florida's going to be impacted, it's a question of how bad Florida's going to be impacted," said William "Brock" Long, administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

As the weather forecasts and warnings from officials grew increasingly dire, hundreds of thousands of people across Florida fled their homes in an effort to get out in time to escape Irma's devastation. About 5.6 million people in Florida — more than one quarter of the state's population — were ordered to evacuate and an additional 540,000 were told to leave the Georgia coast.

Authorities opened hundreds of shelters for people who did not leave. Hotels as far away as Atlanta filled up with evacuees.

By Friday evening Irma was an only slightly weakened Category 4 storm, and forecasters said it could be back up to Category 5 when it comes ashore near Key West on Sunday morning.

Forecasters adjusted the storm's potential track more toward the west coast of Florida, away from the Miami metropolitan area of 6 million people, meaning "a less costly, a less deadly storm," University of Miami researcher Brian McNoldy said.



Nevertheless, forecasters warned that the hurricane's winds were so wide they could reach from coast to coast, testing the nation's third-most-populous state.

"This is a storm that will kill you if you don't get out of the way," National Hurricane Center meteorologist Dennis Feltgen said. "Everybody's going to feel this one."

Irma killed at least 22 people in the Caribbean and left thousands homeless.

Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and the eastern part of Cuba reported no major casualties or damage. But many residents and tourists farther east were left reeling after the storm ravaged some of the world's most exclusive tropical playgrounds, known for their turquoise waters and lush vegetation. Among them: St. Martin, St. Barts, St. Thomas, Barbuda and Anguilla.

Local, state and federal officials have issued ominous warning after warning as the storm zeroed in on Florida, making clear how much danger they felt the state could face in the coming days. Long urged people from Alabama to North Carolina to monitor and prepare for Irma, calling the storm "a threat that is going to devastate the United States, either Florida or some of the Southeastern states."

Floridians are familiar with ominous forecasts and hurricane warnings. Many in the state have painful memories of Hurricane Andrew, which made landfall as a Category 5 monster in 1992, and other storms that brought lashing rain and winds.

But when asked about people in South Florida who intend to ride out the storm at home, Long was blunt.

"I can guarantee you that I don't know anybody in Florida that's ever experienced what's about to hit South Florida," Long said. "They need to get out and listen and heed the warnings."

Florida Gov. Rick Scott has warned people that evacuation zones could expand, and said that all Floridians "should be prepared" to leave their homes.

Airports across the state said they would suspend flights and cease operations. Publix, a grocery store chain, announced plans to close stores across the state in waves and did not say when they would reopen.

Tom Bossert, homeland security adviser to President Donald Trump, said Friday that people need to have enough food and water to get by during a period when the rain and wind will prevent authorities from getting to them.

"We have pre-deployed and pre-staged, but we can't actually get to that final point of care until conditions permit," he said.

Many people ordered to leave Broward and Palm Beach Counties were directed to public schools, which Scott has shuttered across the state so they can serve as shelters and staging areas for first responders. Many public schools across the state canceled classes, while colleges had also closed campuses and rescheduled football games.

Pompano Beach High School, which is just a few miles from the Atlantic Ocean, was transformed Friday into a haven for about 150 people seeking shelter from Irma. Several volunteers said they expected that the school, one of about 20 facilities Broward County is using as shelters, would reach its capacity of 280 people by today.

Those already packed into the school's cafeteria had one thing in common: They were either unable or unwilling to leave the area, despite a mandatory evacuation order.

Many occupants came fully prepared. A number of air mattresses, chairs and sleeping bags were set up in neat rows throughout the cafeteria. Three free meals a day will be served.

Bill and Jane Borum, both native Washingtonians and retirees, were reading to pass the hours.

The Borums live in a condo at the Bay Colony high-rise in Fort Lauderdale, just steps from the ocean, and left when an evacuation order was issued.

They thought about driving north to get out of harm's way, but traffic was horribly jammed and "we really didn't have any place to go," said Jane Borum, who retired to South Florida with her husband.

"Our kids in Maryland wanted us to fly home, but we couldn't get on a flight, so now we're here," she said.

"It's our first time in a shelter — and the last, I hope."

This report includes material from the Associated Press.

## Flood Recovery

### **Harvey's wrath may force rural Texas' most desperate to leave town for good**

Dallas Morning News

By Corbett Smith

September 9, 2107

REFUGIO -- Loretta Capistran hung T-shirts on the metal railing of her second-floor apartment, sorting through what she wanted to keep. Her apartment took a beating during Hurricane Harvey: Windows busted, water blown in.

Five of the six buildings in the Refugio Apartment complex on Osage Street, where Capistran lived, suffered major damage. Sections of roofs were peeled off by the winds. Ceilings sagged and collapsed from the water.

"I'm just trying to save what I can," she said. "Everything got wet, got damp."

Nearly two weeks after the storm, the town of 2,800 is bustling with energy. A parking lot behind one of the gas stations on the town's main thoroughfare, Highway 77, is lined with 18-wheelers and service trucks. As one resident put it, the town was moving from rescue and recovery to rebuilding.

But that's not the case at the Osage apartments, one of two low-income complexes in Refugio, about 40 miles southwest of Victoria. Because of the damage, the 48-unit complex is closing, perhaps for good. The apartments have been deemed uninhabitable, and last Sunday, Capistran and nearly 100 other residents received a 10-day notice to vacate.

After that date, all their possessions will be pulled out and discarded, as the apartment's management company brings in insurance adjusters to decide the facility's fate.

For small towns like Refugio, where a quarter of its residents live in poverty, affordable housing is scarce -- or nonexistent. Staying to rebuild sometimes isn't an option. Instead, relocation becomes the reality.

For the poor, "there's no place to live in Refugio," Joy Ministries pastor Joel Garcia said. "There was barely any place before the hurricane."

Despite being 20 miles inland, Refugio was one of the towns hardest hit by Harvey, blasted with hurricane-force winds one day, then dumped on by torrential rain the next as the storm made a slow pirouette back to sea.

Capistran weathered the tempest in her apartment. Born and raised in Refugio, she'd been through big storms before -- Hurricane Celia had skirted the town when she was a little child.

But she'd never experienced anything like Harvey.

When the storm hit in the night on Aug. 25, it came with fury, shattering the windows in Capistran's apartment.

"Boom. Boom. Boom," as Capistran described it, holding out her arm. "See? I get goose bumps just talking about it. It was very, very terrible. One of the worst things I've ever been through."

She moved to her closet for shelter, praying that her father -- who lived nearby -- was safe. It took hours for the storm to die down enough for her to check on him.

"It seemed like a day," she said. "I thought it would never end."

In the days after the storm, Capistran tried to stay in her deteriorating apartment, unwilling to surrender her belongings to the elements or others.

But the heat, combined with musty, noxious smell of mold growing in the dampness, drove her to leave. Capistran is staying in town with her cousin for now, although it's clear she doesn't want to be a burden.

"It's really hard," Capistran said. "I hope I get my place back. I need to get my place back."

REBUILD OR RAZE?

That might not happen.

The property's management company, Lubbock-based Medlock Southwest Management Corporation, will evaluate whether to rebuild or raze the complex after insurance adjustors assess its condition next week.

"At that point, we'll know a little more on a timeframe on when it will be rebuilt, if it is going to be rebuilt," the company's president, Kaye Medlock, said.

It's not a simple decision.

Medlock's company manages 36 government-subsidized apartment properties in four states, including 12 in Texas. Another one of their complexes, the 40-unit Bay of Aransas apartments in Rockport, was also destroyed by Harvey.

Both apartments were built decades ago by limited partnerships to take advantage of low-income housing tax credits, and both facilities, according to Medlock, were nearing the end of their lifetimes as a tax vehicle.

From that point, the facilities simply become managed properties, with thin margins.

Calling the situation in the Gulf Coast "heartbreaking," Medlock said her company returned full security deposits to Refugio and Rockport residents last week, giving people quick access to funds that could be used for the emergency or as a deposit on another dwelling.

Once residents have cleared out what's salvageable, the apartment's on-site manager Cindy Faulkner -- who weathered the storm in her first-floor apartment with her husband Charles, the maintenance manager -- provides them with a "letter of priority." That document puts a resident at the top of waiting lists at other low-income complexes subsidized by either the U.S. Departments of Agriculture or Housing and Urban Development. Without it, those waiting lists can be months or years long.

Faulkner said Osage residents are looking all over the state, in nearby communities such as Beeville and Corpus Christi and in much farther away locales like San Antonio or Dallas.

'THIS SHALL PASS'

Garcia, the pastor, said that until he was asked about it, he hadn't pondered the impact that Harvey's diaspora could have on his hometown.

"I've just been thinking about next week," he said, sitting under a pop-up tent at his church's make-shift relief station.

He's been busy.

Before the Red Cross came into town, Garcia's church was the town's only shelter, housing as many as 40 evacuees despite not having electricity or running water. Until a few days ago, Joy Ministries served breakfast, lunch and dinner to as many as 500 people. The church now serves two meals, breakfast and dinner, with the food prepared off-site.

After a little reflection, Garcia -- a pastor for the past 18 years -- said if the apartments close, it will have an impact on his ministry. He intentionally built the church directly next to the complex to help its residents. Many members of his congregation lived there, including several children.

He pulled out his phone to show a picture of a group of kids at a shoe store in Corpus Christi. Over the summer, Garcia's church took 27 children -- those who had gained enough points in a summer program -- to buy shoes. Many of them lived at the Osage apartments.

Given the financial fragility of those residents, if people can't stay in town with family, they'll head to other towns where relatives are present or available work can be had, Garcia said.

But will they return?

Garcia said he hopes so, roughly paraphrasing Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3: "There's a season for everything, and this shall pass."

Capistran said that she couldn't be anything but hopeful, too.

s a community, I hope we can stick together and help each other through this. If we can stand together, we can get back on our feet and get to normal soon. I hope."

## **After A Disaster, FEMA Documents Home Damage, A Former Inspector Explains**

[WCAI-FM Cape Cod \(MA\)](#)

September 8, 2017

After a disaster in the U.S., some of the first people on the ground work for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. It offers shelters and assistance, of course, but FEMA also contracts with companies to send inspectors into people's homes to figure out how bad the damage is.

Jack Fryday was one of those inspectors, working in the aftermath of several big storms early in the decade and in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Marketplace Weekend host Lizzie O'Leary called up Fryday at his home in Texas. The following is an edited transcript of their conversation.

What's the first thing you do when you arrive at a home?

Well, the first thing when you walk up to it, you drive your car or truck up to this house, you're scanning the whole area, looking at the next-door neighbors, and you're just looking at everybody. And just looking at the house in general to see what's, you know, what's there. And we've already made an appointment with the homeowner, so they're in the house if you can get in the house, or they're waiting outside in their car. Whatever. But when you drive up to the house, first of all, after being over there for about 30 minutes, every house looks the same. You drive down the streets. You've got all of the contents of the house out on the street curb, and all of the houses, you know, look virtually the same. If they had a tornado go through, they're all torn-up roofs, etc. If they just had wind or rising water, then they all look the same. So it's no different from one house to the other, once you get into that subdivision.

So when you would walk into a house, what were you looking for? What were you assessing?

Well, you walk in there with your camera and your notepad, and you just do an overall general assessment of it. And then you meet with the owners and get all of the paperwork out of the way, and then you just start room by room, looking at detail by detail. You take pictures of every room, all the damage that's done. I write up, you know, "X number of feet of Wet carpet. Kitchen cabinets damaged. Furniture is damaged." You just write up everything that you see: windows broken out. Ceiling caved in. Feet rock wet. Just whatever you see.

What do people need to have when they know that you're coming?

Well, the most important thing they have to have is, I've got to have documentation that they own the property. That's the main documentation I'm looking for, is proof that they own the property. And that becomes a challenge for some of them.

What did you do when people didn't have the paperwork? If they they couldn't prove that they owned the home? After all, a lot of people lose their paperwork in a storm.

Well, there's not much for me to do. I actually ran into one family in Breaux Bridge, Louisiana, where I was during Katrina. And in one home I went to, an older house, there was a young couple in there. And the first thing I said was, "You know, I need to see proof of your ownership of the house. Do you have a deed?" And they said, "No sir. We just live here." And to make a long story short, the house belonged to their grandfather who passed away, and then one of the family members just moved into it. And then they passed away and another family moved into it. Nobody knows where the deed is. So there was nothing I could do there.

What happens to a family in a situation like that?

I really don't know. I don't know if they go to other people for help, but I don't know what they did from there.

After a FEMA inspector does their work, then often the insurance company, if you've got insurance, the adjusters step in, and they move on from there. How does the government and the insurance company work together at that point?

The insurance companies are going to send adjusters out. And FEMA sends adjusters out, too. I'm not an adjuster, I'm just inspecting to see what's there. The adjusters go in and really look at the detail stuff and assign dollar values to it, and that sort of thing. And so the FEMA adjusters, they work for FEMA, but they are the insurance adjusters. And they come out, and go to each house and meet with the family and actually look at the house, item by item. Measure rooms. Got this many square feet of carpet in this room. They've got these windows broken out. They got this or that. They document everything meticulously. And then they send that all to their company, and the company then puts a dollar value to it.

You are out of this line of work right now, but, you know there are people who are listening to this, who may have been affected or could be affected by a disaster in the future. What would you tell them to do? What advice would you give them?

The first thing you want to do is pay attention to your adjuster. If you don't think the adjuster is doing what he should do, or writing up everything, and you're not happy with what his deal is, you can, of course, protest back to the company, but the best thing for you to do is to hire a public adjuster. A public adjuster is somebody that's licensed to do adjusting. He works for you. He does not work for an insurance company, and they will charge you a percentage of what [you] get. But since they're on commission, they're going to get everything they can. They're going to look at everything in there and really do you a good job. So I

would recommend to anybody who is not satisfied with the adjuster that they got from the insurance company, look into hiring yourself a public adjuster.

## **Harvey's Floodwaters Give Way To Festering Piles Of Garbage**

Associated Press

By Brian Melley And Paul J. Weber  
September 7, 2017

HOUSTON (AP) — Roiling waters in the streets have given way to festering piles of garbage on the curbs.

Harvey's record-setting rains created heaps of ruined possessions that now line entire neighborhoods, some nearly up to the rooftops of the homes that were swamped. All that sodden drywall, flooring, furniture, clothing and toys adds up to an estimated 8 million cubic yards in Houston alone, enough to fill the Texans' football stadium two times over.

Texas and city officials have pledged to make a priority of the monumental task of cleaning it all up, though they stopped short of giving specific timelines, mindful that such cleanups have dragged on longer than anticipated after other major storms.

"We want to get it removed as quickly as possible," Texas Gov. Greg Abbott told reporters Thursday.

For now, the piles big and small have become evidence, of sorts, of the losses from more than 200,000 damaged homes up and down the Texas coast.

Not only are the heaps eyesores, but they are starting to give off a musty funk. And the longer they sit, officials warn, they could become havens for mold, not to mention snakes, rats, skunks and other critters. The junk could also turn into projectiles if, heaven forbid, another hurricane strikes.

"I just can't stand it anymore," said Peggy Lanigan, who took a break from clearing out her Houston home that flooded for the first time in 22 years.

The city is pushing to complete a "first pass" of debris removal within 30 days, said Derek Mebane, deputy assistant director of Houston's solid waste department. He said collecting subsequent piles could take months and warned that if Hurricane Irma causes extensive damage in Florida, the cleanup in Houston could be slowed if resources are diverted. While local crews do the pickups, FEMA covers 90 percent of the costs.

As it stands now, clearing even just one Houston street can take days. Some piles are so massive that a single stack of debris from one home can fill an entire truck.

Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner this week pleaded for help, asking for anyone with heavy equipment suitable for debris removal to reach out.

The trash will go into the city's existing landfills. San Antonio trucks have been sent in as part of an agreement between the two cities to help each other in disasters, the mayor said.

Soon after the storm hit, state officials suspended some environmental rules on waste removal that they said could impede the pace of disaster recovery, which raised concerns among environmentalists.



Trash looters are another concern. Some homeowners spray-painted messages on mattresses to leave them alone because the debris is needed for insurance claims. Others posted signs saying they were just drying out items they intended to save.

Mike Martinez said a king-sized mattress that had been floating in his bedroom days earlier was taken from his yard along with a La-Z-Boy sectional couch. The \$5,000 sofa still looked brand new after the flood but was like a sponge if you sat on it. He couldn't understand why anyone would take it because it's contaminated with floodwater and probably mold.

"It was like a parade of people going by looking at the devastation," Martinez said. "Then there was a parade of people picking up the garbage."

Overturned sofas, listing mattresses and toppled chairs dominate the rubble while smaller, more intimate items hide in the cracks.

The piles also created a sort of archaeological record of the households from which they came. There's a moldering red cooler, a beat-up blue kiddie pool, a pornography stash spilling onto the street. Brand-new golf balls, a full jar of mangoes and a twisted artificial Christmas tree. A book titled "The Inheritance of Loss" seemed particularly poignant.

Sherri Blatt's main concern is that it could be a long wait before the mess is carted away. "This is too long," she said. "Once all the stuff is gone, I'll feel safe."

Almost on cue, a garbage truck rumbled around the corner. But it wasn't there for flood debris — only for the trash that hadn't been picked up in a week and was adding its own odor to the mix.

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Weber reported from Austin, Texas. Associated Press writer Juan A. Lozano in Houston contributed to this report.

## **Atascocita Neighborhood Works To Recover**

Houston Chronicle,

By Dina Kesbeh

September 8, 2017

Atascocita area residents made their way to their homes as soon as waters began to recede to start the post-flooding recovery process after receiving a record of almost 5 feet of water.

A trail of couches, sheet rock, bedding and mattresses led the way down Atascocita Shores as residents began gutting what was once pieces of their homes and leaving it on the sidewalk for trash pick-up.

As if ripping apart memories and their gutting their homes wasn't enough, residents reported many incidents of looting.

"Nothing inside is worth dying for," reads a sign placed outside the home of Chel Bailey after hearing about people driving by, breaking into cars and stealing property placed outside to dry out by homeowners.

“People, they want to take the things that aren’t trash, but if you have insurance, they want to see that and people are saying its trash as a reason for taking it. Just leave it alone,” Bailey said.

As floodwaters rose, Bailey was out helping other people evacuate around Atascocita Shores when her family received the call their neighborhood was being evacuated.

“We didn’t think we were going to get flooding because other people got a lot more water than we did. Our street was evacuated. I’m on the end, so I was able to do a little more walking to get to Atascocita Shore Drive,” Bailey said.

Bailey’s one-story home was consumed with water before they were evacuated by boat. She said they were able to grab a hurricane box that they have, which contains the most important things, and whatever they could fit before leaving.

“We are just going on a wing and a prayer. Luckily, our jobs have been very supportive and said do what you need to do and get paid,” Bailey said.

The family does not have flood insurance because they do not live in a flood zone as do the rest of her neighbors.

Bailey said they applied for FEMA assistance but have not heard back in regards to receiving any funding to help pay for the renovations.

The most irreplaceable items Bailey said they lost were family photos. Everything else is material that will be replaced.

She said this is a lesson learned that in the future they will get flood insurance to protect themselves.

“When they say we will get tons of rain, don’t take it lightly. We just don’t know when to trust the media,” Bailey said.

## **Rebuilding Your Home After A Disaster**

[New York Times,](#)

By Ronda Kaysen

September 8, 2017

Catastrophe can arrive at your doorstep in any number of ways: A century-old tree could hit the roof, faulty wiring could spark a fire or a storm like Hurricane Harvey could unleash its fury and yours could be one of countless homes in its path.

Tragedy’s hand might be unpredictable, but the road to recovery is forged in the language of your homeowner insurance policy, words that will determine how — and if — you will be made whole again.

The disorienting months following disaster are often marked by endless Saturdays spent wandering the aisles of Home Depot; afternoons wasted on the phone arguing with your insurance company about the value of an Ikea crib; and critical decisions made at your most vulnerable hour. And all of this often happens while you are living in temporary housing, wondering if your life will ever return to something like normal.

For Ta-Kuang Chang, a 62-year-old lawyer from Pelham, N.Y., life came undone during a windstorm on a Sunday morning in January 2016. He was lying in bed texting his daughter when a 125-year-old tree from his yard crashed through his roof, landing just inches away. Trapped in his room, he waited for the fire department to free him.

Twenty months later, Mr. Chang is still waiting, mired in a protracted dispute with his insurance carrier over repair costs. The disagreement, partly of Mr. Chang's own making, could leave him on the hook for hundreds of thousands of dollars and illustrates some challenges homeowners face in the wake of disaster. "I am so worried that I will, in the end, be screwed," he said.

In 2015, 5.9 percent of insured homeowners filed a claim, with an average loss of \$11,402, according to the Insurance Information Institute. How many claims come with headaches? A 2014 Consumer Reports survey found that of the six percent of respondents who filed claims for \$30,000 or more, 41 percent reported complaints about things like disagreements over damages or coverage, delays or slow payouts.

"The bigger the claim, the more likely you're going to run into more resistance from the company," said Jeff Blyskal, a senior editor at Consumer Reports.

For homeowners facing what is often the biggest crisis of their lives, navigating a complex and sometimes resistant bureaucracy can be bewildering and exhausting.

In hindsight, the smell of burning toast should have tipped off Suzanne Kaufman. But September 27, 2010, was a busy morning in the Kaufman home, a 100-year-old bungalow in Glen Rock, N.J. Ms. Kaufman, a medical social worker who is now 43, rushed out the door to take her 3-year-old to preschool while the babysitter fed the 18-month-old baby. "Looking back on it, there was nothing toasting," she said.

In the few minutes it took to dash from her car to the classroom, Ms. Kaufman missed five calls from the babysitter. The baby was O.K. The house was on fire. Ms. Kaufman heard sirens in the distance and knew they were for her.

She returned home to watch the house that she and her husband, Matthew Kaufman, a lawyer who is now 44, had owned for 20 months burn. By late afternoon, the adjuster from the insurance company charged with assessing the damages was surveying the smoldering property. The loss was total.

"It was like, boom, your house is boarded up," Ms. Kaufman said.

Vendors, like contractors and companies that remediate smoke, descended on the property. "People are slipping cards under your door, and you just don't know what to do," she said. "You are just freaking out."

Among the business cards being pressed into your hands will be those of some public adjusters, independent insurance experts who can navigate the process for you, albeit for a hefty fee. In New York State, public adjusters can charge as much as 12.5 percent of your settlement. Ms. Kaufman did not see a need for one because at the time she wasn't working, and she planned to dedicate her waking hours to the task of rebuilding her home. But some homeowners, particularly those with limited time, view a public adjuster as an advocate well worth the fee.

USAA, the family's insurance carrier, had a list of preferred vendors. But were they the best ones? In the end, the Kaufmans decided to go with a contractor recommended by a family member.

The policy would rebuild the house to its original condition, but the Kaufmans thought maybe they should use this rebuilding to expand. Insurance, however, is intended to make you whole again, not bankroll a new

addition. So how would they finance improvements? Contractors advised them to tear the house down to the foundation. USAA initially objected, but eventually relented, and the Kaufmans eventually moved into a much larger home. There was “a lot of negotiating every step of the way,” Ms. Kaufman said. “None of this just happens.”

Suffer an isolated event, and chances are your insurance adjuster will arrive within a day. That equation changes if you suffer a loss during a natural disaster like a hurricane. Just getting anyone to show up can take days, or weeks.

“If you have a big catastrophe and the television cameras are around, the insurance companies are handing out checks for additional living expenses,” said J. Robert Hunter, director of insurance for the Consumer Federation of America. But “when the big claims start to roll in, that’s when the trouble starts.”

On the night of October 29, 2012, as Hurricane Sandy bore down on New Jersey as a tropical storm, Casey Kait and Stephen Weiss struggled to convey the gravity of their situation to their insurance carrier, USAA. They had been putting their two young children to bed when a 100-year-old pin oak tree fell onto their four-bedroom home in South Orange. The family fled to a neighbor’s house, where they called 911 and USAA.

“It was Sandy, so they were getting calls from everywhere,” Ms. Kait, 41, a hiring manager, said of USAA. “They said, ‘We’ll send somebody in a week.’” (Mr. Weiss, 42, works in marketing.)

Days passed, and the family still had not seen an insurance adjuster. “I remember getting Mama Bear,” Ms. Kait said about one pivotal phone conversation with an agent. “I was like, ‘I have two young children and no house.’” “That got the agent’s attention. Within an hour, an adjuster called, telling Ms. Kait that he would be at her door by 10 a.m. the next morning.

There was no small measure of haggling with insurance adjusters during the process, but nine months after the storm, Ms. Kait and her family moved back into a fully restored house.

Standard insurance policies do not cover everything. Flood damage requires a separate policy usually backed by the National Flood Insurance Program, although a few private insurers provide it independently. Only about 12 percent of homeowners had flood insurance in 2016, according to the Insurance Information Institute, and most homeowners affected by Hurricane Harvey do not have flood coverage.

In 2015, water damage accounted for 45 percent of all property damage, according to the insurance institute, yet insurance policies often limit or exclude coverage for water-related damage from mold, a sump pump failure or a sewage backup.

“People worry about fires, which obviously make sense, but the reality is that water losses are 13 times more likely to occur,” said Annmarie Camp, an executive vice president at Chubb Personal Risk Services. “I know we’re in the middle of a hurricane, but it’s a very strong likelihood that homeowners will suffer an internal water leak.”

Unless your policy covers the replacement cost of your belongings, you might receive only a fraction of the money needed to buy a new sofa. About 60 percent of homes are underinsured, according to Consumer Reports.

You might also have to fight for payment even for losses that are covered. Ms. Kait and Mr. Weiss of South Orange argued with an adjuster about the extent of damage to some of their possessions. The adjuster thought furniture in the children’s rooms that had been covered in debris could be cleaned and reused. The couple disagreed. Overwhelmed by the tasks ahead, Mr. Weiss and Ms. Kait didn’t fight every battle. “To

be honest, we let a lot of things go,” Ms. Kait said. “You don’t have time to go over every item in your life and fight about it when you’re trying to get your life back.”

Some battles can drag on for months.

More than a year and a half after a fallen tree made his Pelham home uninhabitable, Mr. Chang is still sparring with Travelers, his insurance carrier. The dispute hinges on competing estimates for repairs. Travelers estimated it would cost \$224,000 to repair the home. An engineer that Mr. Chang hired estimated the work could cost as much as \$808,000. The roof, chimney, second story and parts of the first floor needed to be rebuilt.

Typically, when the estimates don’t line up, the homeowner’s contractor hammers out a compromise with the insurance adjuster. But Mr. Chang instead invoked a formal resolution process known as appraisal, where both sides hire an independent appraiser and a mediator may be appointed to break an impasse. This process, however, can lengthen and complicate matters.

The case lingered, in part because Mr. Chang traveled frequently for work and was not able to monitor the appraisal process closely. After eight months of living in temporary housing paid for by Travelers, Mr. Chang withdrew his appraisal demand and tried to restart direct negotiations with Travelers, but Travelers opted to stick with the appraisal process.

To keep a dispute from escalating, consumer advocates suggest that homeowners navigate the insurance process with caution from the very first call until the final check is cut. “Start by trusting the company,” said Mr. Hunter, of the Consumer Federation. “But you do it warily, and you do it professionally.” Keep notes of conversations and copies of correspondence and receipts. If you run into trouble with the claims department, contact the public relations department. Hit enough roadblocks and you may need a lawyer.

Last October, Mr. Chang began rebuilding his house, despite having no resolution on the total amount that Travelers would pay. He paid for some of the \$425,000 of work with a partial payment of around \$185,000 from Travelers, and the rest with savings. “I’m not trying to be unjustly rich, I just want to make up what I’ve lost,” Mr. Chang said. “I just want to be made whole.”

Mr. Chang’s case has been further complicated by the fact that even though he was still living in an apartment paid for by Travelers, he rented his house in July to a tenant for \$7,700 a month. The house was listed for rent in May when the work was completed as a “totally renovated Pelham Heights home,” according to Zillow. Mr. Chang said he needed the rental income to offset the money he put into the renovation. He said he plans to move out of the Travelers apartment later this month, into a vacant house in Port Chester, N.Y., that belongs to his mother.

Travelers estimates that it has paid nearly \$500,000 to repair Mr. Chang’s home, replace damaged property and cover additional living expenses for his family, according to a statement from Matt Bordonaro, a Travelers spokesman. The case now is before a mediator whose decision will be binding.

Even if your insurance carrier agrees to pay for home repairs, you may not see the money right away. If your home has a mortgage, checks for repairs to the dwelling will likely be made to both you and your lender. Your bank will often hold onto the money, dispensing it as the work is done, adding another layer of bureaucracy and, often, delay.

Nearly a year after fire destroyed his Glen Rock home, Mr. Kaufman marched into his mortgage lender’s office in Hoboken, N.J., demanding his insurance money. The bank would not release an \$80,000 payment

from the insurance company, for reasons that have not been made clear to Mr. Kaufman. But the work was nearly done and bills needed to be paid. “I had a large blowout with the bank president,” Mr. Kaufman said.

Rather than continue to fight with the bank, the Kaufmans borrowed \$80,000 from Mr. Kaufman’s parents. Eventually, the bank released the money.

In a blog called “From Fire to Fabulous,” Ms. Kaufman chronicled her experience, starting with the day the house was torn down to the foundation. “We poured glasses of Korbel to mark the occasion,” she wrote.

Sixteen months after the fire, the Kaufman family moved back home. At 3,000 square feet, the new house is twice as large as the previous one, with an open floor plan, large kitchen and four large bedrooms. Mr. and Ms. Kaufman paid for the addition, about a third of the rebuilding cost, separately. “Everyone says, ‘Your house is amazing,’” Ms. Kaufman said. “But I really wouldn’t recommend going through this to anybody.”

## **Harvey Damaged At Least 200 Houston Schools**

Huffington Post

By By Travis Waldron

September 8, 2017

Hurricane Harvey wreaked havoc on the Houston Independent School District — the largest public school system in Texas and the seventh-largest in the United States — forcing school closures and disrupting the lives of hundreds of thousands of students and teachers.

As of last Friday, district officials reported that each of the 200 school-related facilities they’d inspected had sustained damage from the hurricane, which was later downgraded to a tropical storm. An additional 100 facilities likely face similar problems, but have been inaccessible because of flooding or other circumstances, Richard Carranza, the district’s superintendent, told HuffPost.

Jonathan Bachman/Reuters Evacuees in Vidor, Texas, rescued from the floodwaters of Tropical Storm Harvey run toward a school bus bound for Louisiana on Aug. 31, 2017.

Schools in other Houston-area districts have also suffered damage. But if Hurricane Katrina, which struck the Gulf Coast in 2005, is any indication, the worst of Harvey’s effects on education are still ahead. Katrina, which displaced more than 370,000 students in Mississippi and Louisiana, created a lost generation of students who were forced from their homes and schools. As a result, their academic achievement was lower, their dropout rates were higher, and they struggled with joblessness even a decade after the storm.

School officials in Houston, which took in more Katrina evacuees than any other city, are leaning on the research, experiences and improved technology that came out of Katrina to implement plans to reduce Harvey’s worst possible consequences for children — and to prevent the storm from negatively impacting students for generations to come.

Houston schools will provide three free meals a day to every student during the upcoming school year, an expansion of an existing program. The district has also organized food and clothing drives with neighboring districts. When students and teachers return to school next week, crisis counselors will be waiting for them. Houston’s district will also use technology to identify and track displaced and homeless students, Carranza said, a crucial step in implementing the lessons learned from Katrina.

But Houston can't successfully mitigate Harvey's worst educational impacts on its own. The school district has already faced crunched budgets and potential funding shortfalls. Experts who studied the aftermath of Katrina say an influx of money is necessary to hire staff and implement full recovery programs for displaced students who will need years of academic and emotional support.

And although the House of Representatives will take up its first Harvey-related legislation this week — a \$7.85 billion relief package that will help the Federal Emergency Management Agency continue its efforts in Houston and other affected areas — Congress' crowded docket and looming spending fights could imperil future relief funding, including the sort of targeted education funding school districts need.

#### 'The Needs Of Kids Will Outlast The Patience Of Adults'

For the vast majority of students, merely returning to the normalcy of school and receiving early counseling will be enough to recover, or come close to it. A year after Hurricane Andrew hit Florida in 1992, nearly 80 percent of students had recovered from the psychological trauma they experienced because of the storm, according to researchers. Even after Katrina, 71 percent of students had similarly recovered within two years of the storm making landfall, similar research found.

But for some students, recovery will take longer — and that's where Houston and other affected districts need to avoid the biggest post-Katrina mistakes.

A year after Katrina made landfall, students the storm displaced missed more days of school and had lower rates of achievement than they did before the hurricane, according to Dr. Michael Ward, who, as an education professor at the University of Southern Mississippi, studied Katrina's effects on students who moved schools.

But their rates of suspension and discipline for misconduct also fell, suggesting that teachers and administrators were more understanding and lenient than they typically had been — that they “really worked hard and really went out of their way to make sure that kids who had been displaced and suffered worst got the support and the help they needed from teachers,” Ward said.

Five years after Katrina, however, rates of suspension for displaced students had skyrocketed beyond their pre-storm levels, and Mississippi's Katrina kids were twice as likely to drop out of school than students the storm hadn't displaced, Ward found. (The numbers were likely similar in Louisiana, he said.)

“So the lesson there appears to be that, if you're not thoughtful — if the adults in the process are not thoughtful — what will happen is that the needs of kids will outlast the patience of adults,” Ward said. “Unless there's a system for keeping track of kids who were displaced, the next school year they may end up with a teacher who doesn't know they experienced that sort of trauma. Two years out, five years out, it's kind of old history — except for the kids.”

Houston and other districts, Ward said, will “need to maintain support systems around these kids for multiple years.”

The most vulnerable children — kids from poorer families and students of color — are particularly likely to suffer from the hurricane. Harvey has already had a disproportionate impact on those communities, and the demographics of Houston's public schools — in 2016, 62 percent of its students were Hispanic or Latino, while another 24 percent were African-American — suggests the educational outcome could be similarly unequal.

Scott Olson via Getty Images Volunteers and students from Houston's C.E. King High School help clean up the school in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Harvey on Sept. 1, 2017.

### How The Federal Government Can Help

Texas doesn't have any near-term plans to provide extra money to help Houston and other school districts deal with the educational effects of Harvey. DeEtta Culbertson, a spokeswoman for the Texas Education Agency, said she was not yet aware of any plans for the state to step in to provide such funding, and last week, Gov. Greg Abbott (R) said he would not call a special legislative session to seek Harvey relief funding.

That leaves the feds. After Katrina, Congress approved \$880 million in federal funding to assist school districts that took in displaced students, intended to help them hire staff and provide support to students in need.

As part of the package, Congress granted each district \$1,500 per displaced student, allowing districts to provide basic education services, reopen schools, and operate temporary facilities. But many districts said that funding fell short of what they needed, according to a 2011 assessment from the Government Accountability Office, and only three of the 13 districts the GAO observed reported using the funds to hire new staff.

Hiring new counseling staff may be especially important in Texas. The state employs one school counselor for every 465 students, said Jill Cook, the assistant director of the American School Counselors Association, which recommends a ratio of one counselor for every 250 students.

School districts also reported that the verification process for the aid program proved challenging, according to the GAO. And district leaders told the agency that they were overly cautious in how they spent the money because they were unsure what costs it covered and feared they would have to return misused funds to the federal government.

Much of the federal aid, meanwhile, provided assistance only for the school year immediately following Katrina, even though children and their schools continued to deal with the storm years after it devastated the Gulf Coast. A federal package that helps avoid the failures of Katrina's recovery may need to be more ambitious than Congress' package a decade ago.

Members of Congress have held committee-level discussions about education relief funding, though no dollar figure has been floated yet, one House Republican said. Carranza, the Houston superintendent, said that he has heard "good rumblings" from lawmakers about "federal support for all of the students who have been displaced and students who will be actually homeless."

The good news, Ward said, is that Katrina led to loads of new information about what does — and doesn't — help schools recover after a storm. The challenge now is to apply those lessons.

"It's a worst-case scenario," Ward explained. "Katrina was a 500-year flooding event, and you hope that we'd have been spared something that catastrophic. But here we are again, and I'd like to hope that the research and the dissemination of that research after Katrina is helping Texas school districts now."

Matt Fuller contributed reporting.



## **J.J. Watt fund surpasses \$30 million for Harvey relief**

KHOU-TV, Houston

September 8, 2017

HOUSTON - Houston Texans star J.J. Watt has now collected more than \$30 million for flood victims following Hurricane Harvey.

The fund has far outgrown the original \$200,000 goal, surpassing the \$30 million mark on Friday.

Over 197,000 people have made donations to the fund as of Friday night, according to the You Caring page.

On Wednesday morning the fund received a boost in the form of a \$5 million personal donation from Charles Butt, CEO of H-E-B.

RELATED: How H-E-B kept stores stocked after the storm

"The love that I have developed for this city... I feel like it's one big family," Watt said in a news conference. "It feels like everyone is stepping up."

The fund will close at 5 p.m. on Friday, September 15.

## **Texas Flood Relief Planned**

Columbus (IN) Republic

September 9, 2017

Two local churches are forming work teams to help to residents in southeast Texas who have lost their homes to flooding.

Volunteers from Asbury United Methodist Church and St. Peter's Lutheran Church will work through national relief organizations to determine where the teams will provide help, pending approval from emergency management officials.

No one goes to a disaster site unaffiliated and uninvited, said Steve Ferdon, who helps direct Asbury's Disaster Response Team known as DiRT.

Asbury teams will be working through UMCOR, the United Methodist Committee on Relief, the church's international relief organization.

Teams from St. Peter's Lutheran Church are being formed and will work with Samaritan's Purse, an organization that had volunteers come to Columbus to help with relief work after the city's 2008 flood, said Greg Patterson, who has worked on several relief trips with his wife Thecla through St. Peter's.

Planning timing of trips

At the earliest, local volunteer teams will travel to the Houston, Texas, area later this year, then return in the spring, after the first wave of cleanup begins, Ferdon said.

Asbury hopes to put together a team of at least 20 adult volunteers to travel to the flood-stricken area in November or December, and then return sometime between late March to May.

Ferdon said local residents should recall what happened during Columbus' flood of 2008 to remember why it is crucial for volunteers to arrive months after the disaster.

The first month or so after water recedes, property owners scramble to clean out their flood-damage homes, get assessments and try to determine how they are going to repair their homes, he said.

"They become emotionally tired, physically tired," he said. "That's when people like us come in from around the country. We come in and we work."

Patterson said St. Peter's is thinking about a week in mid-October to do its relief trip, working with Samaritan's Purse to schedule where and what the team will be doing.

Samaritan's Purse volunteers came to Columbus in 2008 to help local residents, something St. Peter's volunteers remember, he said. The national relief organization provides semi trailers full of every tool imaginable to help the work crews in their mission.

Ferdon said most of the teams will be helping families that have flooded-out homes that don't have insurance and do not have enough resources to even begin a repair or renovation.

Crews will "muck out" the homes, taking them down to the studs and allowing the structure to dry out, he said. Then the Asbury teams will return in the spring and put the homes back together again — one doing drywall, another doing roofing — as the repairs are done in stages.

"It's not for the faint of heart," Ferdon said of the work, saying it is physically demanding and stressful.

Workers will be picking up and moving heavy objects, moldy materials and other debris, Ferdon said. They will become familiar with using a shovel and chain saws, he said.

The teams have to be self-sufficient and often partner with area churches to provide lodging space, where teams utilize sleeping bags on foam mats and shower in disaster-relief shower trucks provided by FEMA, or the national relief organizations. Many churches in the disaster zone agree to feed the teams with their own resources during a team's stay.

Patterson said Samaritan's Purse will organize all the resources needed for St. Peter's team, and church members have already begun contributing money that will pay for a rental van for transportation and gas and food expenses for the trip south.

#### Lessons to learn

For those working with UMCOR, Ferdon said volunteers must take early response team training, which he is organizing now as people sign up to be on an Asbury team.

During the training, volunteers learn what they can and cannot do at a relief site, how the chain of command works with emergency management, and how to be safe on a job site, he said.

In addition to advising residents not to plan relief trips to Houston on their own, he also advised against putting together truckloads of items and taking them to the disaster zone.

He remembers one relief effort when volunteers received a crate of taco sauce, and another — the Henryville tornado site — where a semi rolled up loaded with green beans.

“Donate money to the Red Cross,” Ferdon said of the more effective way of helping flood victims.

Patterson said he and his wife normally don’t talk about going out on relief trips.

“We feel we are serving for God and no one really knows about it,” he said.

As a seed corn salesman for Stewart Seeds, Patterson said during harvest time he’s usually talking to farmers in their harvest vehicles. But the farmers understand, as does his employer, when he wants to do mission work.

“They came here for us,” Ferdon said of the Texas volunteers who arrived in Columbus to help local residents in 2008. “That’s why we do it.”

To learn more about UMCOR, which is the United Methodist Committee on Relief, visit [umcor.org/](http://umcor.org/)

To learn more about Samaritan’s Purse, a nondenominational evangelical Christian organization providing spiritual and physical aid to hurting people around the world, visit [samaritanspurse.org](http://samaritanspurse.org)

For more information about the teams from Columbus going to southeast Texas for flood relief, call:

Asbury United Methodist Church: 812-372-4555

St. Peter’s Lutheran Church: 812-372-1571

## **[Beyonce volunteered to help Houston residents affected by the recent hurricane](#)**

[The Telegraph News](#)

Our Foreign Staff

September 9, 2017

Beyonce returned to her home town of Houston, Texas, to show support to residents affected by Hurricane Harvey.

The singer was joined by her mother Tina and former Destiny's Child bandmate Michelle Williams as they volunteered to hand out meals to families devastated by the storm.

The powerful hurricane, which was a Category 4 storm when it hit Texas on August 25, caused historic devastation and widespread flooding.

In a video shared by Tina on Instagram, Beyonce, 36, can be seen sporting plastic gloves to serve green beans into polystyrene containers. In the caption, she said it was the third stop of the day after her daughter sponsored a luncheon for 400 people affected by the hurricane at her local church, St John's, before they paid a visit to the George R Brown convention centre to meet people displaced by the flooding.

The hurricane brought catastrophic flooding to Houston Credit: David J. Phillip/AP

She added: "It was fun unloading the truck and organising the sizes. Please keep the donations coming! Thats Michelle Williams at the beginning of line, serving the chicken, Beyonce on Green beans and me on bread duty. Ingrid over there serving deserts."

A boy plays amongst water-damaged property as the Houston clean-up continues Credit: CHRISTOPHER ALUKA BERRY/REUTERS

Beyonce also announced last week that she is aiding Hurricane Harvey victims through her BeyGOOD Houston relief initiative.

Brock Long, the director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), called Harvey the worst disaster in Texas history, and expected the recovery to take many years. Preliminary economic losses are estimated at between \$70 and \$200 billion, with a large portion of the losses sustained by uninsured homeowners.

## **'This is human kindness': Hurricane Katrina survivors help Houston after Harvey**

Today

By Meghan Holohan  
September 9, 2017

Soon after Hurricane Katrina, Connie Uddo was sitting with a friend in an iHop in Kingwood, Texas, where she was living after she was forced to evacuate New Orleans in 2005. She had just learned that she and her two children wouldn't be able to return to their home to salvage their belongings and start rebuilding their lives.

"My husband tells me, 'I don't think I am going to be able to get us home. Keep the kids in school and find an apartment,'" she told TODAY. "I just lost it."

After experiencing the kindness of people in Houston after Katrina, Connie Uddo knew she wanted to help out. She is coordinating volunteers to help muck and gut houses in Houston. As Uddo cried, two women came over and began comforting her.

"They literally sat at our table and just ministered to us and prayed with us and hugged us and comforted us," she said.

When Uddo went to pay for her bill, she was overwhelmed with gratitude after learning another stranger had already covered it.

"That's what Houston gave to me. They gave me strangers seeing me crying at the table who came up to me and loved on me," she said. "This is human kindness."

Uddo eventually returned to Louisiana and helped rebuild her neighborhood, Lakeview, which was one of the hardest hit areas after Katrina. She founded several nonprofits, including NOLA Tree Project — which is reforesting New Orleans after the devastating storm — and St. Paul's Homecoming Center — which started as a welcome center at her house.

After seeing the devastation from Hurricane Harvey, Uddo quickly packed up her recovery van, which is equipped for gutting and mucking houses, and drove straight to Houston just a few days after the storm hit.

“I knew I had to go,” Uddo said.

New Orleans residents saw damage in Houston and wanted to help in any way they could. Many of them remember how kind Houston was to their city after Katrina.

In the past, Uddo has organized as many as 200 volunteers at a time to help people demolish homes and hopes to bring more to Texas post-Harvey. She is also trying to help Houstonians avoid mistakes that many experienced in New Orleans during the recovery by warning them about contractors who try to defraud them by citing outlandish prices for tasks like black mold removal.

But, more importantly, she is sharing her message of hope with survivors.

“We can tell you ‘We’ve been through this and you’re going to be okay. You are going to be better than okay. You are going to find you are going to be stronger, more resilient,’” she said.

Uddo is not the only New Orleans resident who remembers Katrina and the kindness of Houston. Henry Heaton was just 15-years-old when his family was evacuated in 2005. At the time, Heaton's family owned a ranch house near one of the breached canals. After the storm, the property was entirely underwater.

“My family had some friends in Houston and they found them a temporary home,” he told TODAY. “Friends who took them and made them feel at home.”

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While Houston residents need help mucking and gutting houses, volunteers from New Orleans also provide hope because they're proof that recovery can happen.

When Heaton returned to New Orleans, he met Uddo's daughter, Stephanie, and they became close. When Uddo was looking for volunteers for this weekend's trip, he signed up immediately.

“My heart went out to Houston because I know exactly what was going on,” he said. “New Orleans wouldn't be what it is without all the volunteers who got on a plane and went down there.”

He, too, remembers seeing his waterlogged home for the first time and not being able to stay long because it felt too overwhelming. He also remembers how small but kind gestures made a huge difference.

“A hug goes a very long way,” he said. “Talking to someone who has been in your place and saw what you have been through, it will help.”

For others, being able to give people a meal or a bottle of water feels powerful. Ryan Fitzmorris and his brothers, Jim and John, who are all survivors of Hurricane Katrina, remember how Houstonians provided so much support to New Orleans as it was being rebuilt.

“I got to do something,” he told TODAY. “I have two beautiful sons and if I was in this situation I want someone to help me.”

Many people from New Orleans went to Houston to help in recovery from Hurricane Harvey.

Fitzmorris, who has since moved back to New Orleans and now owns a recovery business, recently started a GoFundMe campaign to raise money to buy supplies for Houston. Over Labor Day weekend, he filled a 26-foot truck with food, water, diapers, and wipes, along with specialty requests like bug spray, citronella candles and chainsaws, and took it to Port Arthur.

He's currently accepting donations to fill the truck again to take to Rockport on Sunday, Sept. 10.

"It is overwhelming. All I did was step up," he said. "I think it's more than just kind of going there and dropping off the valuables. It is letting them know you are not by yourself."

## **Texas Connects Us: Helping Hurricane Harvey Victims**

KXAS-TV, Dallas

By Kris Gutierrez

September 9, 2017

While North Texans weren't directly impacted by Hurricane Harvey, the storm certainly stirred up an awakening.

Many businesses and churches are raising money and collecting donations to send down to Houston, to help victims.

At Valley Creek Church in Lewisville, volunteers are working to fill more boxes.

"It's going to have diapers, pull ups, wipes, the works," said one volunteer.

Whether it's toiletries, food or brand new clothes, each box is filled with more than just necessities. The volunteers make sure each one is packed with love.

"There's something that happens whenever you get to do something like this, " said campus pastor Ben Moreno. "It's like there's something in your heart that is awakened. It's like you are awakened to the purpose of why we are here, it's to love one another, to love your neighbor."

Valley Creek has turned its Next Steps center into a central hub for Harvey relief.

"We felt there was a huge call to action whenever hurricane Harvey hit, " Moreno added.

He's been blown away by the generosity of others as 2,000 volunteers helped sort and pack all the donations. For Stacy Russell, it's much bigger than just giving her time.

We've all seen incredible rescues out of Houston and the Gulf Coast. Now NBC 5 introduces you to some of the rescuers. One team in the Houston Police Department saved 3,000 lives.(Published Wednesday, Sept. 6, 2017)

"As we're teaching our girls at home about God and serving others, what better way to do this first hand then to come here and see what people have donated and see what people have done, " she said.

The church's offices look like war rooms, with maps and diagrams to strategize where the donations will go. So far, six semi-trucks, with more than 2,700 boxes have gone out.

Matt Nelson drove the first truck down to Houston.

"Whether you're dry or wet, rich or poor, no matter where you are in the world, you can help and you can make a difference, " he said.

This is what church looks like. Giving and receiving.

"We keep sending out truck loads and it's still full of donations, and I love that," Moreno added. "That's connecting Texas."

Click [here](#) to see the items Valley Creek Church is collecting. The church hopes to send one truck down to Houston each day until Sept. 15.

## Social Media

### FEMA Conversation

#### Public Conversation:

- There was a slight increase in inquiries on our official social media accounts last night and today, especially regarding delays in getting homes inspected. Top topics:
  - Housing inspections: waiting for the inspectors and complaints about inspectors. ([Example 1](#), [Example 2](#), [Example 3](#))
  - Frustration over not yet receiving funds ([Example 1](#), [Example 2](#))
- Frustration with finding hotels that will participate in the Transitional Sheltering Assistance program continues, as residents are still reporting that they could not find participating hotels with room. People are using their personal social media profiles to ask each other how to identify which hotels accept “FEMA vouchers”, rather than asking the official FEMA accounts directly. ([Example 1](#), [Example 2](#), [Example 3](#))
- There was a large increase in Harvey-related conversation on the national level last night due to negative reactions to the [President’s tweet](#) about churches being entitled to FEMA assistance. Most reactions state that the churches should not receive funds because they do not pay taxes.
  - Some of the public are expressing that the churches are seeking funds to be able to provide more for survivors; others still disagree with these views. ([Example 1](#), [Example 2](#))
  - The amount of people who feel that churches [should receive funding](#) for them opening their doors to help survivors are very low.
- There is a relatively small but steady number of people sharing information about getting hired to work for FEMA to help Hurricane Harvey survivors. Most of these posts are simply passing the information along to anyone who may be interested in applying. ([Example 1](#), [Example 2](#))

### Operations

#### Recovery:

- Facebook community groups are actively collecting [volunteer offerings](#), services, and [supplies](#) in lists that are being updated daily. Volunteers are primarily asking where to deliver items and which neighborhoods need help with [mucking out homes](#). Many residents are sharing the Crisis Clean Up hotline ([800-451-1954](#)) for those who want to request assistance.
  - [Katy area list](#)

- Residents in Rockport are reporting a variety of donation collections and discussing the need for a [more organized way of managing](#) all donations in the area. There is concern that people who are seeking specific items are having a hard time finding them because of the multitude of locations where ad hoc collection drives are being held.

### **Mass Care:**

- There have been a few posts from residents in the George R. Brown shelter in Houston expressing concern about the conditions inside. These posts are receiving high amount of attention from other social media users, and most are expressing negative sentiments towards the Red Cross and shelter volunteers. ([Example 1](#), [Example 2](#))

### **Public Health:**

- Free medical care and tetanus shots are still being announced in various locations across the affected area.
  - [Rosenberg](#)
  - [Friendswood](#)
  - [Jefferson](#)
- As of 1204 ET, [Jefferson County Emergency Management](#) announced that the Texas Dept. of State Health Services would begin contract mosquito control spraying and also requested FEMA assistance for additional mosquito control.

### **Transportation:**

- As of 0910 ET, a local [Fort Bend County](#) news outlet posted an article explaining that tolls will resume on Sept 11th.

### **Public Perception**

- Conversations among the affected community continue to highlight successful efforts in recovery, with many people expressing thanks to volunteers and businesses that have helped out. The hashtag [#HoustonStrong](#) continues to be frequently used to highlight these positive stories. ([Example 1](#), [Example 2](#))
  - Celebrity visits (such as Beyoncé and Janet Jackson) and donations are among the most frequently discussed recovery topics. ([Example 1](#), [Example 2](#), [Example 3](#))
  - Both Texas residents and non-residents are [responding positively](#) to Governor Greg Abbott's tweet explaining that the commission to rebuild Texas has already stated working towards rebuilding.
- There are multiple posts from local Port Arthur and Beaumont residents describing the living conditions as horrible, along with people needing help receiving food, water, and other basic living supplies. ([Example 1](#), [Example 2](#), [Example 3](#))



#### Rumors/Misinformation

- There are no new significant rumors or misinformation at this time.